

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 34743

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, CB, TH
SUBJECT: INCIDENTS ALONG THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER

SUMMARY: SMALL INCIDENTS ALONG THAILAND'S BORDER WITH CAMBODIA
OCCUR FAIRLY REGULARLY. THIS MESSAGE INCLUDES A SELECTION OF
BOTH PUBLICIZED AND UNPUBLICIZED ONES WHICH REPORTEDLY
OCCURRED IN RECENT WEEKS. A MEETING OF THAI-CAMBODIAN LIAISON
OFFICIALS TOOK PLACE DEC 23. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BANGKOK PRESS HAS BEEN REPORTING VARIOUS INCIDENTS
ALONG THE BORDER WITH CAMBODIA IN RECENT DAYS. ACCORDING TO
ONE STORY, RESIDENTS OF A THAI BORDER VILLAGE COMPLAINED TO
THE ARANYAPRATHET DISTRICT OFFICER THAT KC SOLDIERS EARLY LAST
WEEK SCARED OFF A VILLAGER WORKING IN A BEAN FIELD, BURIED MINES
TWO KILOMETERS INSIDE THE COUNTRY, AND DUG A 500 METER TRENCH
ONE KILOMETER INSIDE THAI TERRITORY. POLICE REPORTEDLY
LOCATED FOUR CHINESE-MADE MINES. IN ANOTHER A POLICE
HELICOPTER SEARCHING FOR A THAI VILLAGER WHOM KC HAD FORCED
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TO DRIVE HIS TRACTOR INTO CAMBODIA WAS ON THE RECEIVING
END OF KC GUNFIRE DEC 27 IN TA PHRAYA DISTRICT. CAMBODIANS
ALLEGEDLY SEIZED A THAI FISHING BOAT IN THAI WATERS OFF
THE COAST OF TRAT PROVINCE DEC 21, AND THAI PATROL BOATS
ARE SAID TO HAVE SUNK ONE OF THREE CAMBODIAN VESSELS PUR-
SUING A THAI FISHING BOAT IN THE SAME AREA ON DEC 24,

FINALLY, IT WAS REPORTED THAT A KC RECONNAISSANCE TEAM WAS SPOTTED AT HAT LEK DEC 28, WITH A KC BODY FOUND AFTER THE ENSUING CLASH.

2. IMPORTANCE OF THESE INCIDENTS, IF THEY TOOK PLACE AS REPORTED, SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED FOR THEY HAVE LONG BEEN FAIRLY FREQUENT OCCURRENCES. RTG SOURCES INDICATED THAT A NUMBER OF RECENT ONES HAVE GONE UNPUBLICIZED. KC SOLDIERS ARE OFTEN SIGHTED ON THAI TERRITORY OR FIRE INTO IT. A THAI RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WAS REPORTEDLY FIRED ON IN THE TA PHRAYA AREA ON DEC 1. TWO THAI FISHING BOATS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN SEIZED AND TAKEN TO CAMBODIA'S KOH KONG PROVINCE ON DEC 4, WITH THE FATE OF THE CREWS IN SERIOUS DOUBT. THERE WAS ANOTHER CLASH BETWEEN THAI AND KC FORCES AT HAT LEK ON DEC 12. TO WHAT EXTENT THE THAI MAY BE AT FAULT IN THESE INCIDENTS IS NOT EASY TO DETERMINE, OF COURSE. CT'S BASED IN CAMBODIA AND CAMBODIAN RESISTANCE OUT OF THAILAND ALSO EXCERBATE BORDER RELATIONS.

3. MEANWHILE, BANGKOK POST - REPORTED DEC 29 THAT MEETINGS BETWEEN THAI AND CAMBODIAN LIAISON OFFICE PERSONNEL RESUMED DEC 23, FOCUSSED ON CONFLICT AT HAT LET AND THE ALLEGED INCURSION AND BURYING OF MINES IN ARANYAPRATHET DISTRICT. THE CAMBODIANS DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE LATTER ACTION.
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